

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By Andi Peterson Brown

It's beginning to look a lot like the most wonderful time of the year. And if your home is still on the market, you might be contemplating pulling it for the winter. Hold that thought. Even though real estate activity tends to decline during December, the season can in fact be a great opportunity to showcase your home in its holiday best.

Buyers who are out looking during the holidays are usually more serious about their search. To capture their hearts and secure a sale, here are some quick and easy tips for holiday staging.

Keep it natural, keep it simple. While it might be tempting to display your cardboard cut-out Buddy the Elf or put your Clark Griswold skills to the test, it's best to keep things simple and natural at your front door. Beautiful wreaths, poinsettias, and tasteful, classic twinkle lights will put buyers in the spirit and make a lasting first impression.

Keep it natural, keep it neutral. It's important for buyers to see themselves living in your home, and universals such as winter greenery, decorative candles, pine cones, and glass jars of candy canes and marshmallows all invoke the warmth of the holidays and spread good cheer to the widest pool of buyers.

These tips, coupled with the fact that Lamorinda has a very low housing supply, might just make the difference for that one buyer. And remember: it only takes one.



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Stylish Solutions Decorative Holiday Card Displays

By Ann McDonald



Wreaths are still one of my favorite ways to handle the holiday cards. Why? Because you can change the ribbon and wreath style easily, and add ribbon to handle more cards as the season progresses. Photos courtesy Couture Chateau, llc

Since the holiday season is in full swing this month, I wanted to address the issue of cards: what to do with them, where to put them, how to display them, and most importantly, how to preserve and recycle them at the same time. Each season, I think the holiday card tradition will lose steam. And then the mailbox starts to fill.

The truth? I love the art of writing and receiving hand-written, or at the very least, hand-signed cards. A quick conversation with my 20-something progeny revealed he had no understanding of the value of holiday cards, even as we failed at our attempt at a nice family picture. I tried to explain “in the olden days” we didn’t have pictures of all our friends near and far 24/7 in various “feeds.” Rather, we eagerly awaited the holiday season to see braces on or braces off, hair long or hair short, growth spurts and more. It was a real delight to see the friends, relatives and pets in all of their holiday garb.

The truth is, we probably do not need the card, but we like

the card and its tradition of sorts. I still read the letters, and take time to sort and display cards for those quieter moments in between the hustle of business that can take over during this time of year.

My Top Holiday Card Quick Tips:

1. Get a beautiful letter opener. Yes, you can use a knife – or your fingers, or you can even rip the cards open – but the truth is, part of dressing the home for the holidays includes the subtle systems we allow ourselves to enjoy. Breathe in deep, set the pile of letters down and carefully, with style, use the letter opener. Besides, this way you will never be gluing together an envelope, trying to see the return address so you can send the forgotten card.

2. Sort immediately by follow up needed. Then contain. Do you need to send a card to that person? Did you forget and their card has just arrived? We all have those moments. Once you have a handle on reciprocating the seasonal greeting, it is time to immediately contain. ... continued on next page



We use micro strips and cross cut shredding to protect privacy and mix several batches to get colors fun. This is extremely easy and can be used for party décor (see the Dec. 17, 2014 Lamorinda Weekly article “Last Minute Holiday Décor Ideas” in the on-line archives).